



# BOOSTING EMPLOYEE MORALE

*Most employees agree that job satisfaction – or dissatisfaction – often stems directly from managers' personal actions and attitudes. In this second part of a two-part series, we examine some of the steps employers can take to help strengthen and reinforce employee morale.*

## Part Two: What Can Employers Do?

At one time or another, most of us have been lucky enough to experience one of those productive "feel-good" workplaces where everyone seems to love their job. There's an aura of team spirit, a collective sense of purpose, and an atmosphere of personal responsibility and success. Unfortunately, we also know that not all jobs or workplaces share such good fortune.

What makes the difference? To the casual observer – often to employees themselves – it seems like magic. But successful employers know exactly what actions to take and attitudes to have in order to keep staff members motivated and driven.

Here are some things that employers and managers can do to help cultivate and maintain positive employee morale:

- Take a personal interest. Everyone finds it easier to commit and invest in a relationship – including a working relationship – when they know that loyalty and caring are mutual commitments. Develop and display a genuine interest in your employees' lives – not just the superficial appearance of one. Within the bounds of your own personal comfort, try to appropriately share a part of yourself with them, too.
- Keep the information flowing. Nothing fosters trust and loyalty like a steady flow of timely, accurate information. Employees want to know what's going on. In an information vacuum, staff members tend to assume the worst and feel and behave accordingly. Share successes as well as challenges. And if the news is not good – say, the loss of a key account or the possibility of impending layoffs – be straightforward about it and let your team know what they can do to help.
- Set limits cheerfully. It's understandable for employees to try to win concessions or influence a situation to their advantage. And if that clashes with the company's best interests, it's up to the employer or manager to set limits. Do this with compassion and good cheer. Explain that it is not personal: you understand the employee's position, but you need to balance their demands with what makes sense for the company. Offer a workable alternative, and keep the lines of communication open.
- Keep a finger on the morale pulse. For a number of reasons, employees may not be forthcoming about issues that demoralize them. They may not want to look like complainers, or they may fear being judged or penalized for their views. Check in with your staff members about their concerns. Let them know you welcome constructive comment and criticism.

Ultimately, what employees overwhelmingly want is to feel appreciated, involved and engaged in their jobs. If you can adopt a management style that delivers this, your staff's morale will be high and your team will be more successful.